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AUTHOR Fink, Joel
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ABSTRACT

The secondary social studies lessons in this publication are intended to help teachers improve instruction. Lessons are provided for the curriculum areas of social inquiry, ethical development, and civic competence. In the social inquiry lessons, students learn to describe and explain human behavior. In the ethical development lessons, students reason about what is morally right or wrong for an individual person to do. The concern of the civic competence lessons is with the formulation of a policy and law for the society as a whole. For each curriculum area there is an introduction, sample topics and focus questions, and an explanation of the thinking skills emphasized in the lessons. For each thinking skill, there are exercises for practice. Formulating and testing hypotheses are the major critical-thinking skills taught in the social inquiry lessons. The critical-thinking skills taught in the ethical development and civic competence lessons are giving reasons for value positions taken, identifying factual claims being made in arguments, raising questions about the truth of factual claims, identifying undesirable consequences of policy positions, identifying value claims, raising conflicting values, and raising questions of consistency. The lessons are self-contained. Some examples follow. A hypothesis is presented followed by data. Students must decide whether the data support the hypothesis. In another exercise, students are given value positions (e.g., the use of marijuana should be legalized) and asked to write at least one reason to support the position. (Author/RM)

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A PROJECT TO IMPROVE SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES INSTRUCTION

by
Joel Fink

1981

SO 013 844

AN OVERVIEW OF

CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

(Introduction to Social Inquiry, Ethical Development, & Civic Competence)

IN THE FOLLOWING HANDOUT, YOU WILL FIND (1) AN INTRODUCTION TO EACH CURRICULUM AREA (2) SAMPLE TOPICS AND FOCUS QUESTIONS FOR EACH CURRICULUM AREA AND, (3) AN EXPLANATION OF THE THINKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED IN THAT CURRICULUM AREA.

FOR EACH THINKING SKILL, THERE IS A SAMPLE ITEM, EXERCISES FOR PRACTICE, AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO WRITE A NEW ITEM.

ESEA TITLE IV-C
SECONDARY
SOCIAL STUDIES
INSTRUCTIONAL
IMPROVEMENT
PROJECT

THE CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS COVERED ARE THE FOLLOWING:

SOCIAL INQUIRY

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SOCIAL INQUIRY

INTRODUCTION:

In Social Inquiry lessons the concern is

1. to describe human behavior

   a. what was the case--what happened?
      sample question: Who fired the first shot on Lexington Green?

   b. what is the case?
      sample question: Are 10th graders more influenced by peers or by parents?

   c. what will be the case?
      sample question: Will attending college become less attractive to U.S. students in the 1980's?

2. to explain human behavior

   a. why things happened
      sample question: Why did Richard Nixon lose the election of 1960?

   b. why things are the way they are
      sample question: What causes recidivism among ex-convicts?

   c. why things will happen
      sample question: Why may child-rearing practices change in the 21st century?

However, instead of being told the answers to these questions in Social Inquiry lessons, students engage in the scientific investigation of human behavior using the methods of the social sciences and history.

An important goal of Social Inquiry lessons is to make students more able to judge whether factual claims people make are true or not. Social Inquiry does not have as its main concern prescribing that certain things should be done. It deals with what is not with what ought to be.[1]

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[1] This distinction between description/explanation (fact) and prescription (value) is important because the kind of investigation that is necessary in order to decide factual questions is different from that which is required to decide value questions. For example, a class discussion of the question "Is rehabilitation a goal of American prisons?" will be very different from a discussion of the question "Should rehabilitation be a goal of American prisons?"

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SAMPLE TOPICS AND FOCUS QUESTIONS

Was Lincoln a Racist? (History)

Will stricter discipline in school reduce vandalism? (Sociology)

Has the economic gap between rich and poor been closing or widening? (Economics)

Why do some people refrain from participating in elections? (Government)

THINKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED IN SOCIAL INQUIRY LESSONS

1. FORMULATING HYPOTHESES

Students are given a factual question and information (data). They are then asked to formulate an hypothesis (tentative answer) for the question.

Sometimes the data may not be in table, graph, or written form, but instead may be part of the students own experience.

EXAMPLE:

QUESTION: Are some people more likely than others to take part in electoral politics?

DATA:

Participation in Electoral Politics by Income, Education

Respondent's Family Income	Percent Who: Voted in Last Presidential Election	Voted in Last Congressional Election	Tried to Persuade Someone*	Attended a Political Meeting or Rally	Worked in a Campaign	Belong to Political Group
Less than $1999	53%	39%	11%	3%	2%	2%
$2000–3999	63	50	15	4	3	3
$4000–7499	64	53	19	5	6	4
$7500–14,999	76	65	31	10	7	6
$15,000 and over	89	77	46	22	16	11
Education						
8 grades	43%	37%	12%	5%	2%	1%
High school graduate	75	59	28	7	7	4
College	90	83	53	28	13	16

HYPOTHESIS: (POSSIBLE ANSWER Participation in electoral politics is higher among those people who have some reason to be optimistic about their chances for personal success in the society.

NOTE: that the hypothesis may be "readable" directly from the data or may be (as in the example) an inference based on the data.

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EXERCISE 1:

QUESTION: What are some possible causes of juvenile delinquency?
DATA:

KEN

Ken, a former delinquent, wrote this short autobiography the day before he was discharged from the Highfields Treatment Center, Hopewell, N.J.

To Whom It May Concern:

I've never been asked to write an autobiography before so pardon any errors I might make.

I was born October 25th 1950 in the Bronx [N.Y.]. The neighborhood wasn't too rough or too calm. Well, at any rate I made out all right living my years there. When I was seven years old we moved from our two-family house there to a house of our own in Teaneck, N.J. The schools in Teaneck were about one-half year ahead of the Bronx schools so I barely passed the 2nd grade (I never quite got back to par although that may not have been the reason). Being an asthma sufferer and pretty skinny anyway I was pretty much of a weakling, thus mocked and ribbed many a time by other boys. This continued until I got to be around fourteen years old and in the 9th grade. Then I began to look around for other company and after some time got into a group with long hair, black leather jackets, etc. I made this group my goal since in my mind I felt that the more intelligently scholastic boys in school more or less feared and held a certain respect for these boys. Soon, after acquiring a motorcycle jacket, letting my hair grow, etc., I felt I had to do something illegal to "feel the part" more. Thus began my career which was to eventually end me up in Highfields!

It began with dopey little things like pushing over bus stop benches, rolling public trash cans into the street, taking the paint off cars with instant shaving cream bombs, robbing glove compartments of cars, etc. etc. etc. After over a year of this type of thing I began to fear the police less and less. Then in September 1966 I made my first big move; several other boys and I decided that robbing houses and stores would be a profitable venture. Between September and December '66 I broke into eleven places and was in on three car thefts—although the whole gang was responsible for about forty break and entries of which there were several narrow escapes. Then on January 10th 1967 one of the gang was picked up in a stolen car. Early the next morning he told the police about some of our activities and consequently we were all picked up. After two days of questioning many confessions were obtained, and I paid my 1st visit to the Hackensack Parental House. After several days I was released to my parents' custody, and soon left home because of hostile feelings—from my father mostly—over a period of a few days. After being out on the street for a few days I was again picked up by the police. I was with a former member of our group. I was again sent to the Parental Home to await trial. After our trial the gang was scattered in Annandale, Boystown, Highfields, and some were on probation. I came to Highfields on February 25th 1967 and in a period of four months my attitude toward getting in trouble and having a bad reputation has changed. I have found that another group of friends would accept me, even knowing my past reputation. A job waits for me on the outside. I feel sure that I'll make out all right.

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HYPOTHESIS:

EXERCISE 2:

QUESTION: Why do students skip classes?
DATA: Draw on your own experience of skipping behavior.
HYPOTHESIS:

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

2. TESTING HYPOTHESES

This thinking skill can be divided into four sub-skills:

a) Predicting the Consequences of Hypotheses
b) Evaluating Hypotheses
c) Revising Hypotheses
d) Formulating Alternative Hypotheses

2a PREDICTING THE CONSEQUENCES OF HYPOTHESES

Once an hypothesis has been stated, it can be tested. The first step in the testing process consists of deciding what statements would be found to be true if the hypothesis is true.

EXAMPLE:

In what follows, an hypothesis will be stated. Provide at least one statement which would be found to be true if the hypothesis is true.
HYPOTHESIS: A major cause of repeated criminal behavior is the leniency with which the courts treat convicted persons.
A STATEMENT WHICH WOULD BE FOUND TO BE TRUE IF THE HYPOTHESIS IS TRUE: In those places where convicted persons are treated more harshly, there is a lower rate of repeated criminal behavior.

EXERCISE 1:

In what follows, an hypothesis will be stated. Provide at least one statement which would be found to be true if the hypothesis is true.
HYPOTHESIS: Students skip classes because the work on those days is too hard.
A STATEMENT WHICH WOULD BE FOUND TO BE TRUE IF THE HYPOTHESIS IS TRUE:

EXERCISE 2:

In what follows, an hypothesis will be stated. Provide at least one statement which would be found to be true if the hypothesis is true.
HYPOTHESIS: The problem of unemployment can be solved by giving tax breaks to the wealthy.
A STATEMENT WHICH WOULD BE FOUND TO BE TRUE IF THE HYPOTHESIS IS TRUE:

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

NOTE:

In order to help students learn this skill of predicting consequences of hypotheses, they can be given a multiple choice exercise like the following.

EXAMPLE:

In this question an hypothesis will be stated followed by a series of statements. Circle those statements which would be true if the hypothesis is true.
HYPOTHESIS: The Civil War and the Reconstruction did not make a permanent impact on southern politics.

IF THIS HYPOTHESIS IS TRUE, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS WOULD BE FOUND TO BE TRUE WHEN THE DATA ARE EXAMINED?

(A.) Many of the leaders of the Confederate states were sent to Congress after Reconstruction.

B. Many former slaves held political offices after Reconstruction.

(C.) The Democratic Party, which had dominated southern politics before the Civil War, continued to dominate it after Reconstruction.

2b. EVALUATING HYPOTHESES

Once data have been collected, they can be evaluated to determine if they 1. support the hypothesis
2. do not support the hypothesis, or
3. do not help in evaluating the hypothesis.

EXAMPLE:

In the following question, an hypothesis is presented followed by data. Indicate whether the data <u>support</u> the hypothesis, <u>do not support</u> the hypothesis, or <u>do not help in evaluating</u> the hypothesis.
HYPOTHESIS: When parents show lack of interest in their children, the children have lower self-esteem.

DATA:

RESPONDENT'S SELF-ESTEEM AND "PARENTAL INTEREST" INDEX

Respondent's Self-Esteem	Parental Interest: No Evidence of Lack of Interest	Parental Interest: Some Evidence of Lack of Interest
High	49%	29%
Medium	25	26
Low	26	44
Total	100	100*
(Number)	(945)	(241)

*The percentage in this column does not add to 100 percent because of independent rounding of the figures.

THESE DATA: (support) do not support do not help in evaluating
(circle one)

EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER:
44% of the "some evidence" group had low self-esteem as compared with only 26% in the "no evidence" group. Conversely, 49% of the "no evidence" group had high self-esteem as compared with only 29% of the "some evidence" group.

EXERCISE 1:

In the following exercise, an hypothesis is presented followed by data. Indicate whether the data support the hypothesis, do not support the hypothesis, or do not help in evaluating the hypothesis.

HYPOTHESIS: More families owned two cars in 1960 than in 1950.
DATA:

Year	Number of Automobiles in U.S.
1910	460,000
1920	8,130,000
1930	23,000,000
1940	27,470,000
1950	40,000,000
1960	56,000,000

THESE DATA: support do not support do not help in evaluating
(circle one)

EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER:

EXERCISE 2:

In the following exercise, an hypothesis is presented followed by data. Indicate whether the data support the hypothesis, do not support the hypothesis, or do not help in evaluating the hypothesis.

HYPOTHESIS: Capital punishment deters murder.

DATA:

Abolition States	Nearby Retentionist States
Michigan, 4.3	Illinois, 5.1
Rhode Island, 1.0	Massachusetts, 1.5
Delaware, 6.5	Maryland, 5.5
Wisconsin, 1.3	Indiana, 4.4
Maine, 1.7	New Hampshire, 1.3
North Dakota, 0.5	South Dakota, 2.1
Minnesota, 1.3	Nebraska, 2.3

Murder Rates per 100,000 in 1960

THESE DATA: support do not support do not help in evaluating
(circle one)

EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER:

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

2c. REVISING HYPOTHESES

In some cases, the data do not support the initial hypothesis and instead, they suggest a different hypothesis.

EXAMPLE:

Please read the following hypothesis and data, then revise the hypothesis.
HYPOTHESIS: Race plays no important part in determining a person's social position in Brazil.

DATA:

	Percentage of each Race in the Social Classes of Brazil			
	White	Mulatto	Negro	All Races
Upper Class	20	4	0	12
Middle Class	69	61	60	63
Lower Class	11	35	40	25
TOTALS	100%	100%	100%	

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The initial hypothesis is not supported since whites are overrepresented in the upperclass and Negroes are overrepresented in the lower class.

A REVISED HYPOTHESIS MIGHT BE:

In Brazil, race plays a part in determining whether a person will be in the upper or lower class.

EXERCISE:

Please read the following hypothesis and data, then revise the hypothesis.

HYPOTHESIS: The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

DATA:

Table 9/2. **Distribution of Families, by Income 1954, 1964, and 1974**

(Income in 1974 constant dollars)

Income	Number of families (thousands)			Percent distribution of families		
				Total		
	1954	1964	1974	1954	1964	1974
Total	41,951	47,956	55,712	100.0	100.0	100.0
Under $4,000	9,238	6,570	4,997	22.0	13.7	9.0
$4,000 to $6,999	9,448	7,721	7,258	22.5	16.1	13.0
$7,000 to $9,999	10,246	8,584	7,704	24.4	17.9	13.8
$10,000 to $14,999	8,609	12,708	13,582	20.5	26.5	24.4
$15,000 to $24,999	3,612	9,783	15,787	8.6	20.4	28.3
$25,000 or more	798	2,590	6,385	1.9	5.4	11.5

The initial hypothesis is not supported since there are fewer families earning under $4,000.

A REVISED HYPOTHESIS MIGHT BE:

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

2d. FORMULATING ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

In some cases, the data do support the initial hypothesis, however, an alternative hypothesis might also explain the findings.

EXAMPLE:

In the following question, the data do support the hypothesis. Identify at least one other hypothesis that might explain the findings.

HYPOTHESIS: President Carter's economic policies have resulted in higher inflation and higher unemployment.

DATA:

	1976	1980
Inflation	6%	12%
Unemployment	5%	7%

ANOTHER POSSIBLE HYPOTHESIS THAT COULD ACCOUNT FOR THE DATA IS:
In our economy, there are cycles of inflation and unemployment that take place no matter what is done by the administration.

EXERCISE:

In the following question, the data do support the hypothesis. Identify at least one other hypothesis that might explain the findings.

HYPOTHESIS: The teaching methods presented in SSSIIP will result in more learning by students.

DATA: (fabricated wishfully)

Students' pretest mean score	Students' posttest mean score
50	75

ANOTHER POSSIBLE HYPOTHESIS THAT COULD ACCOUNT FOR THE DATA IS:

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT & CIVIC COMPETENCE

INTRODUCTION:

In both Ethical Development and Civic Competence lessons, the focus is on judgments of what ought to be rather than on claims of what is the case (Social Inquiry).

In Ethical Development lessons, students reason about what is morally right or wrong for an individual person to do. In Civic Competence lessons, the concern is with the formulation of a policy and law for the society as a whole. The emphasis in Civic Competence is placed on public issues to be resolved by government, while in Ethical Development, the decisions are those faced by individuals.

In both Ethical Development and Civic Competence lessons, students are presented with a focus question and are asked to take positions and to give reasons for their views. In addition, they engage each other in rational dialogue and raise questions about the positions taken and the reasons given by other students. It is not sufficient for students to simply express their point of view as they might in "values clarification" lessons. Instead, the emphasis is on their giving reasons, raising questions about other positions, and defending their own views.

SAMPLE TOPICS AND FOCUS QUESTIONS:

ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Should Kenny report to the IRS that his brother has not been paying his taxes?
2. Should Lieutenant Smith follow orders and drive the Nez Perce Indians off their land?
3. Should Helga agree to hide Jews escaping from the Nazis?

CIVIC COMPETENCE

1. Should people who are illiterate be allowed to vote?
2. Should abortions be paid for with public funds?
3. Should the U.S. support right wing regimes even if they violate the human rights of some of their citizens?
4. Should motorcycle helmets be required?
5. Should capital punishment be reinstated?
6. Should pre-trial publicity be limited in any way?
7. How should the U.S. allocate its food surpluses?
8. Should the U.S. adopt an open immigration policy?
9. How should affirmative action be pursued?

THINKING SKILLS EMPHASIZED IN ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIC COMPETENCE LESSONS

1. GIVING REASONS FOR VALUE POSITIONS TAKEN

After the focus question has been posed, students are asked to take a position and to make their arguments and reasons explicit.

EXAMPLE:

Write your position on the following policy issue and give your reasons.
QUESTION: Should motorcycle helmets be required?

POSITION & REASON: No, because motorcyclists have the right to do what they want with their own bodies.

EXERCISE:

Write your position on the following policy issue and give your reasons.
QUESTION: Should forced integration of schools be discontinued?

POSITION & REASON:

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

NOTE:

A modification of this skill is to ask students to give at least one reason for opposing positions on a policy question.

EXERCISE:

Write at least one reason which supports each of the value positions given below.

A. The use of marijuana should be legalized.
   REASON:
B. The use of marijuana should not be legalized.
   REASON:

2. IDENTIFYING FACTUAL CLAIMS BEING MADE IN ARGUMENTS

In order to challenge others' positions and arguments, it is useful to be able to isolate the factual claims they are making.

EXAMPLE:

Identify the factual claim(s) being made by the person making the following argument:
ARGUMENT: We should reinstate capital punsihment so that we will have fewer murders in this country.
FACTUAL CLAIM(S): Capital punishment will function to deter people from committing murders.

EXERCISES:

Identify the factual claim(s) being made by the person making the following argument:
ARGUMENT: We should cut the taxes paid by people in the upppr income brackets in order to create more jobs.
FACTUAL CLAIM(S):

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

3. RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TRUTH OF FACTUAL CLAIMS

One way to challenge others' position and arguments is to show that a factual claim or assumption being made is not true.

EXAMPLE:

Identify a factual claim being made in the following argument that might be false and that might be challenged in the course of a dialogue.
ARGUMENT: Federal funds should be used to develop renewable energy resources so that solar and wind power can be used instead of unsafe nuclear power to supply our energy needs.
QUESTIONABLE FACTUAL CLAIM(S):
1. Nuclear fuel is unsafe.
2. Solar and wind power will be sufficient to replace nuclear power as a way to meet our energy requirements.

EXERCISES:

Identify a factual claim being made in the following argument that might be false, and that might be challenged in the course of dialogue.
ARGUMENT: We should oppose any legislation requiring the registration of all handguns in the U.S. because people kill people, guns don't kill people.
QUESTIONABLE FACTUAL CLAIM(S):

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

4. IDENTIFYING UNDESIRABLE CONSEQUENCES OF POLICY POSITIONS

One way to challenge others' positions and arguments is to show that if their policy were adopted, it might result in consequences that would be considered undesirable.

EXAMPLE:

For the following policy position, identify any undesirable consequences that you believe might follow if the policy were adopted.
POLICY: We should put a limit on the amount of yearly income that persons can receive.
POSSIBLE UNDESIRABLE CONSEQUENCES: But if we put this limit on people's income, they will refuse to take on more challenging work because there would be no personal gain for them.

EXERCISE:

For the following policy position, identify any undesirable consequences that you believe might follow if the policy were adopted.
POLICY: We should legalize the use of marijuana.
POSSIBLE UNDESIRABLE CONSEQUENCES:

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

5. IDENTIFYING VALUE CLAIMS

In order to challenge others' positions and arguments, it is useful to be able to isolate the value claims they are making.

EXAMPLE:

Identify the value claim(s) being made in the following argument:
ARGUMENT: We should not have a guaranteed annual income in the U.S. because that would doom the poor to perpetual dependence.
VALUE CLAIM(S): It is good for people to be independent and able to meet their own needs.

EXERCISE:

Identify the value claim(s) being made in the following argument:
ARGUMENT: Newspapers should be prevented from publishing evidence about alleged criminal behavior before the accused's trial because it makes it difficult to find an unbiased jury.
VALUE CLAIM(S):

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

6. RAISING CONFLICTING VALUES

A value position taken by another person can be challenged by introducing another value which conflicts with the position he/she has taken.

EXAMPLE:

For the following argument, identify a conflicting value.
ARGUMENT: Socialized medicine should be rejected because Americans should be able to make their own choices about health care protection.
CONFLICTING VALUE: But, all Americans should have a right to receive health care no matter how much money they may have.

EXERCISE:

For the following argument, identify a conflicting value.
ARGUMENT: Teachers should be able to prevent articles from being published in the school newspaper because these articles could damage the school's reputation in the community.
CONFLICTING VALUE:

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

NOTE: A thinking skill that might be taught is "IDENTIFYING CONFLICTING VALUES". Instead of asking students to generate a conflicting value, they might be asked to pick the conflicting values out of a case.

EXAMPLE:

The American Nazis believe that they should be allowed to march through Jewish neighborhoods in Chicago carrying signs saying negative things about Jewish citizens. A group called the Jewish War Veterans believe that the Nazis should not be able to march through these neighborhoods because it will make people riot and create disturbances. What values are in conflict in this case?
CONFLICTING VALUES IN THIS CASE ARE: Protecting people's safety and freedom of speech.

EXERCISE:

John believes that all Haitians escaping political persecution should be admitted into the U.S. Mary believes that there is a danger to the American wage earner from the flow of unskilled foreign labor.
CONFLICTING VALUES IN THIS CASE ARE:

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

NOTE: A multiple choice format could also be used in teaching and testing for this skill

EXAMPLE:

The American Nazis believe that they should be allowed to march through Jewish neighborhoods in Chicago carrying signs saying negative things about Jewish citizens. A group called the Jewish War Veterans believe that the Nazis should not be able to march through these neighborhoods because it will make people riot and create disturbances. The values which are in conflict in this case are:

a. freedom of religion and protecting people's safety.
(b.) protecting people's safety and freedom of speech.
c. the right to a fair trial and freedom of the press.
d. freedom of the press and freedom of speech.

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

7. RAISING QUESTIONS OF CONSISTENCY

The consistency with which someone holds a principle can be challenged by identifying a situation in which the position they would take would not be consistent with the principle.

EXAMPLE:

For the following argument, formulate a challenge to the consistency of the principle being expressed.
ARGUMENT: Gary Gilmore the convicted murderer should not be executed because taking a life is wrong.
CONSISTENCY CHALLENGE: If it is wrong to take a life in the Gilmore case, then you must also believe it is wrong to take the life of someone who is about to kill your son.

EXERCISE:

For the following argument, formulate a challenge to the consistency of the principle being expressed.
ARGUMENT: It is right for me to not report income on a tax return because many people do it
CONSISTENCY CHALLENGE:

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

NOTE:

In order to help students learn to generate the new situation, as a preparation they might be asked to select from some alternatives the one position to which someone who holds a principle would be committed if (s)he were being consistent.

EXAMPLE:

Sharon believes that her friend Jill should not have shoplifted because it is wrong to take another person's property without permission. If she believes this, she must also believe that Jill should not

a. accept a gift.
b. lie to her father.
c. read her sister's mail.
(d.) take a library book.

EXERCISE:

Betty believes that forced sterilization is wrong because people should be able to do whatever they want with their bodies. If she believes this she must also believe that:

a. there should not be laws to prevent the use of possible dangerous drugs.
b. it is a good idea for schools to prevent students from smoking.
c. marijuana is a dangerous drug.
d. in poor countries people want children in order to help with the work.

TRY ONE YOURSELF:

TANK McNAMARA
by Jeff Millar & Bill Hinds
BUT IN JUST PENALIZING, NOT EJECTING PLAYERS WHO FIGHT, THE NHL IMPLIES THAT FIGHTING IS A NATURAL ELEMENT OF THE GAME.
FIGHTING IS TACITLY APPROVED IN HOCKEY, TANK...
THE GAME IS SO NATURE SO FRUSTRATING THAT WITHOUT THE RELEASE OF FIGHTING, PLAYERS MIGHT INJURE EACH OTHER MORE SEVERELY.
WE THINK OF FIGHTING AS ANOTHER WAY TO MAKE OUR JOBSITE SAFER AND TO ENHANCE THE WORK EXPERIENCE.
SOUNDS GOOD. NEXT TIME I GET FRUSTRATED AT MY JOB, I'LL PUNCH OUT THE GUY SITTING AT THE NEXT DESK.
I GUARANTEE THAT'LL MAKE BOTH OF YOU FEEL BETTER.
SPORTSTALK

INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS CHECKLIST

The following skills are characteristic of social studies instruction which emphasizes student activity and de-emphasizes teacher exposition.

I. SKILLS IN INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Objective: The teacher is able to state what students will do during the lesson and is able to evaluate whether the objectives have been achieved.

Common Difficulty

Objective states what teacher will do, not what students will do.

Context The teacher orients students to the lesson and explains why it is important.

Common Difficulty

Teacher begins the lesson "cold" without priming students' interest.

Directions The teacher gives directions clearly, anticipates potential confusion and alleviates it.

II. SKILLS IN PRESENTING THE TOPIC

Problem: The teacher clearly identifies the major focus question of the lesson and attempts to generate some dissonance in minds of students about this question. This question will hold together the component activities of the lesson.

Common Difficulty

The focus question is not formulated clearly enough to be understood by students.

Sequence:
Variety: The teacher organizes the lesson activities in such a way that each builds on the earlier ones. An appropriate amount of time is spent on each activity. To avoid monotony, the teacher plans various things to do during the lesson, employs a variety of media, and utilizes various grouping arrangements.

Common Difficulties

Students are asked to engage in the same activity for the entire lesson and do not remain involved.

The lesson activities do not match the stated objectives.

The lesson activities are discrete and are not clearly connected one to the other.

The lesson is slow getting to the main point.

Too much time is spent on one lesson activity. e.g. students remain in small groups for a longer period than is warranted.

Concepts: The teacher recognizes concepts which may be new or unclear to students and clarifies them through the use of examples, non-examples, and other strategies.

Common Difficulties

Concepts which are central to the understanding of the lesson remain unexplained.

Explanations of concepts are restricted to the teacher's providing of definitions. The students may memorize the definition, but the concept remains unclear to them.

Students are not asked to apply a new concept as a way of assessing their comprehension of it.

III. SKILLS OF RATIONAL DISCOURSE

Questions: The teacher poses higher level questions about the problem. These questions are open-ended and require students to reason. The questions aim at stimulating students to think further about their positions. The goal is not necessarily to change participants' minds, but rather to deepen and sharpen their thinking by asking them to respond to objections.

Common Difficulties

The teacher asks too many questions with the result that each is abandoned prematurely and is not fully discussed.

The questions asked are unclear. A common confusion is between factual questions (e.g. "What will happen in this situation?") and value questions (e.g. "What should happen in this situation?")

The questions asked are not answerable by students because: they are too general (e.g. "What are your views on capitalism?"); the students lack necessary data or information (e.g. "Does capital punishment deter crime?")

The questions asked do not generate interest because the answers are obvious (e.g."How would you feel if you were sentenced to life imprisonment?") or because there are no criteria established for evaluating answers (e.g. "Who was worse off during the period of industrialization, coal miners or sweat shop workers?")

All student responses are accepted by the teacher and other students and no request is made for reasons or supporting evidence.

All questions asked are of the same type. For example, the teacher asks only fill-in-the blank or short answer factual questions to the exclusion of questions that require the student to think about an issue.

The teacher does not allow students sufficient time to respond before answering his/her own question.

Inquiry: The teacher models the steps of the scientific method of investigation and stimulates students to employ them. The students may be asked to formulate hypotheses about an empirical question, to test their hypotheses by gathering and examining data or they may be asked to both formulate and test hypotheses.

Common Difficulty

The scientific investigation is more a process of showing that a predetermined answer is correct than it is an open examination of the available data. (Proving vs. testing or investigating.)

Dialogue: The teacher models the skills of rational dialogue and urges the students to employ them. The goal is to structure the discussion so that participants experience it as a fruitful rather than as a futile exercise.

The general skill includes the following sub-skills.

Clarifying: The teacher clarifies and sharpens the issue being discussed so that participants are clear about the focus of their dialogue. The group process is also clarified when necessary.

Listening: The teacher encourages students to listen to others before they respond. This listening is necessary if they are to make contact with each other rather than engage in parallel conversations.

Giving Clear Reasons: The teacher encourages students to give reasons for the positions they take, rather than simply asserting their views. Further, they are pressed to elaborate on their arguments, leaving less work for the listener. If the relevance of arguments to the topic under discussion is not clear, students are asked to make the connection explicit.

Staying With an Issue: The teacher encourages students to continue discussing a question as long as it is fruitful to do so. Questions are pursued deeply rather than superficially. They are not abandoned prematurely.

Noticing and Preventing Digressions/Tangents: The teacher does not allow the discussion to stray from topic to topic. Tangents or digressions that are not relevant to the question under discussion are identified. Instead of pursuing these digressions, the teacher refocuses the discussion back to the original topic.

Making Topic Changes Explicit: Where it is appropriate to conclude the discussion of one topic and to move to a different one, the teacher makes the topic change explicit so that participants are clear about what is being discussed.

Stock-Taking: The teacher describes how the discussion has progressed and summarizes what has been said. This is useful not only at the end of the discussion, but also during those times when participants have lost track of what has been accomplished and of what remains to be done.

Common Difficulty

The discussion is disorderly; participants do not listen to each other and more than one person talks at the same time.

Different issues are being discussed at the same time and irrelevant comments are not set aside.

IV. SKILLS IN FACILITATING GROUP PROCESS

Awareness: Empathy: The teacher is aware of and makes appropriate responses to the general emotional atmosphere in the classroom and the feelings of individual students. Confusion or non-involvement on the part of the students is noticed. The teacher is not so self-absorbed as to be oblivious to students.

Recognition: The teacher acknowledges what students say, refers back to earlier comments made by students and credits those who make them.

Student Involvement and Student Interaction:

The teacher employs strategies which maximize student participation and minimize teacher domination of discussion. The teacher draws as many students as is possible into class discussions. The teacher is able to highlight disagreements in students views. Students' are encouraged to question and to respond to each other directly without the intervention of the teacher.

Common Difficulties

The teacher repeats or rephrases student comments unnecessarily and thereby reduces student "air-time" and prevents them from interacting directly with each other.

The teacher misses opportunities for allowing students to draw generalizations, summarize discussions, or respond to the questions of other students.

The teacher allows a small minority of students to dominate discussions and thereby encourages others to remain passive.

LESSON PLAN

Teacher: _____

Curriculum Program: _____

Lesson Title: _____

Category: _____Social Inquiry _____Ethical Development _____Civic Competence

Focus Question(s):

Student Performance Objective(s):

Sequence of Activities:

Evaluation Design:

Higher Level Questions:

CLINICAL SUPERVISION FOR INSTRUCTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Steps of the Clinical Supervision Cycle

I. PRE-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE: a short meeting between teacher and supervisor to provide a framework for the classroom observation that is to follow.

During this first step of the cycle the teacher meets with the supervisor to reach an agreement or form a contract. The teacher first orients the supervisor to the lesson by presenting a lesson plan which includes objectives and activities. Then the supervisor asks the teacher what to look for during the lesson. Mutually, they agree about which teaching behavior(s) will be noted by the supervisor. No more than a few are identified. Agreement is also reached on the kind of data to be recorded by the supervisor while observing the lesson. The supervisor refuses to accept a vague contract.

II. OBSERVATION: While observing the lesson unobtrusively, the supervisor prepares a sound factual basis for helping the teacher analyze the lesson after it ends.

During this step of the cycle the supervisor collects data based primarily on the pre-observation agreement. Data should be descriptive, not evaluative. They should be an accurate account of what the supervisor actually saw and heard during the lesson. The supervisor may record data in addition to those agreed upon during the pre-observation conference.

III. ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY: The supervisor carefully organizes the data recorded during the lesson and plans for the conference to follow.

The data analysis focuses first on the pre-observation agreement. The supervisor organizes the data into patterns (a pattern here is a recurring behavior). Other patterns suggested by the data are also identified by the supervisor. Once patterns have been identified and documented with recorded evidence, the supervisor decides which patterns to raise for discussion with the teacher. In deciding, the supervisor honors the following three principles:

1. Salience - Assessing whether the pattern is a conspicious one, i.e. does it seem to be having a significant effect on student learning?

2. Fewness - Raising only a few patterns at the most so as not to overwhelm the teacher.

3. Psychological Accessibility Considering how threatening a pattern may be to the teacher. Deciding whether the supervisor-teacher relationship is close enough to discuss the pattern without provoking defensive resistance.

IV. POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE: An extended meeting between teacher and supervisor for the purpose of thoroughly analyzing the lesson and making future plans.

During this step the supervisor first asks for the teacher's impressions of the lesson and listens carefully for clues of what is of greatest concern to the teacher. The supervisor then raises identified patterns for discussion beginning with those agreed to during the pre-observation conference. Recorded evidence of each pattern is shared with the teacher. The supervisor does not judge whether the patterns are strengths or weaknesses but encourages the teacher to evaluate his own effectiveness. The conference concludes with an agreement on steps for instructional improvement to be examined during the next supervision cycle.

V. POST-CONFERENCE ANALYSIS: Focuses on how helpful the entire process has been for both the teacher and supervisor.

The purpose of this step is to reflect on the way the teacher and supervisor have worked together. The teacher and supervisor explore how well they have communicated. They note contributions made by each, and check each other's perceptions. They express their feelings about their relationship and consider possible obstacles for future supervision cycles. A third party may join this step and share impartial perceptions of what is happening between supervisor and teacher. A video tape of the post-observation conference may yield insights during this final step.

Comparing Clinical Supervision with Traditional Supervision

	Traditional	Clinical
1. Focus	Absence of a clear object of attention.	Mutually agreed upon object of attention.
2. Data	Evaluative and scant: emphasis on supervisor's overall judgments of quality.	Descriptive and detailed: emphasis on joint interpretation.
3. Relationship	Vertical - supervisor is the superior and teacher the subordinate. Supervisor directs and teacher submits to power.	Horizontal - supervisor and teacher are equals in different roles. Supervisor respects teacher's professional autonomy. Control of the conferences is shared. Dialogue occurs.
4. Evaluation	Summative - Supervisor informs teacher of shortcomings and prescribes corrective measures after an observation.	Formative - in an ongoing process supervisor and teacher collaborate to solve problems that are identifie

5. Contact	Hurried and often through prepared forms. May lead to protectiveness whereby teacher conceals weakness and real problems from supervisor in an effort to appear strong.	Extensive face to face conferring during which a helping relationship evolves. Teacher comes to trust supervisor as someone to help solve real problems. Teacher looks forward to future conferences.

PEER TEACHING SUPERVISION PROCEDURES

1. Private pre-conference between teacher and partner.

2. Partner and teacher inform the group of what skills have been identified in the pre-conference. Those specific behaviors are identified which are to be observed and recorded by the group.

3. During the lesson, the partner does not participate, but records data. The other participants attend to the lesson, but record examples of the requested teaching/learning behavior where this is possible.

4. After the lesson, the teacher is given an opportunity to share reactions with the group.

5. With the partner as discussion moderator, the group offers observations on each of the skills identified in the pre-conference. Each skill is discussed separately and group members withhold comments that deal with other matters until these comments are in order.

   The partner supplements the feedback of the group with observations he/she has made.

   As moderator, the partner has the responsibility for deciding when comments are not relevant to the topic under discussion. He/she also decides when a shift in topic is appropriate using the value of the discussion for the teacher as the criterion.

Comments on the Giving of Feedback

1. Be sure your comments are relevant to the topic under discussion.

2. Be descriptive; provide specific examples to support general comments.

3. While value judgments and suggestions for changes in the lesson may sometimes be appropriate, they should not be predominant.

4. It should be remembered that the teacher retains the right to either agree or disagree with value judgments that are offered.

   Respect for and sensitivity to the wishes of the teacher are most important.

GIVING USEFUL FEEDBACK

Feedback to another seems to be most useful when:

1. the person giving the feedback uses "I statements" to describe his/her reactions to the behavior, rather than simply making an evaluative judgment.

2. the description of the behavior is specific rather than general.

3. the feedback is well-timed and the readiness of the receiver to hear the feedback is considered.

4. the feedback is checked with the receiver to insure clear communication.

Example: Just now, when we were deciding the issue, you did not listen to what others said and I felt forced to accept your argument or face attack from you.

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Instead of denying the feedback of others and/or responding defensively, it can be useful to:

1. reflect back to the person what they have said and the feelings you think they are having.

2. ask a question that will encourage a more complete explanation of the problem.

3. use an "I statement" to inform the person giving the feedback about the way you are responding to the feedback.